

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : Sir, during the last budget session of the Council I submitted that sufficient number of questions are not answered. To-day only ten minutes have elapsed and the rules specify that not less than one hour shall be devoted for questions and answers. A number of questions that I have sent as early as Karkadagom last year remain still to be unanswered. To-day we have got 50 minutes more ; for answering questions—yesterday within half an hour all the questions were over. Day before yesterday also the same was the case. I brought this fact to the attention of the chair during the Makaram session and the Chair assured me that as many number of questions as are possible would be answered. Subsequently I addressed a letter to the Secretary pointing out the specific volume containing the Dewan's assurance. We know that the observations and the assurance made by the President were not adhered to and request that as many questions as are possible may be answered.

In Karkatakam last, one year before this, I have sent a question asking for information about the amount of money spent on newspaper. That question has not been answered. I submitted last year that questions that are inconvenient for Government to answer are not answered. The President was then pleased to repel that contention but I am sorry to bring that once again to your notice.

President : I have consulted the Secretary on this matter and this is the information that he has given. Altogether 223 questions have been admitted of which 20 are unstarred. Answers to more than 100 have been received and more are expected during the course of this session. As this session lasts for more than ten days it was thought fit to put about 10 to 12 questions for each day. If however answers to more questions are received, then more questions will be put in for each day for the rest of the session.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : May I know; Sir, whether the answer to the question regarding the amount spent for newspapers have been received? I had sent up that question one year before.

President : It is not open to the honourable member to ask whether the answer of a particular question has been received or not. As a matter of fact, honourable members are perfectly aware that the Departments are trying their utmost to get all the information available and submit them to the Council. All the questions are distributed for the whole session so that ten to twelve questions are put for each day.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION.

President : I have received notice of an adjournment motion from Mr. Padiyara Joseph Kunju which reads thus:—

"I beg leave to move the adjournment of the business of the house to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the serious assault on T. K. Muhamad Kunju Lubba, Judge Village Panchayat Court, Kayamkulam and the Secretary of the Shuraful Islam Sanghom at Kayamkulam on the night of the 24th of Karkatakam 1113 by certain members of the State Congress and the serious apprehension and insecurity to life caused thereby to the public."

Does the honourable member know anything about it personally?

Mr. Padiyara Joseph Kunju (Nominated): Yes, Sir.

President: Mr. Police Commissioner, do you know anything?

Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao (Ag. Commissioner of Police): Sir, a wire has been received last evening and it has been sent to the District Superintendent of Police, Quilon for enquiry.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know who sent the wire.

Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao: From the party who suffered from the assault

President: There are two grounds on which I have to disallow this adjournment motion. First is, that as all the materials that are necessary for discussion are not available to Government, such a matter cannot be made the subject for an adjournment motion. Secondly the Police Commissioner has stated that he has received a telegram and it has been sent for enquiry. On these two grounds I disallow this motion for adjournment.

DEMAND No. IV—PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INCLUDING CAPITAL EXPENDITURE NOT CHARGED TO REVENUE (Contd.)

Mr. K. M. Korah (Vaikom, Kottayam and Changanacherry cum Peermade): Sir, yesterday I was saying about the condition of the Kottayam-Changanacherry road in my constituency. I would draw the attention of the Government to the fact that this road is in a very bad condition and should be metalled as early as possible. Sir, there are other needs also in regard to my constituency to which I would like to draw the attention of Government but finding that the amount allotted for roads is only Rs. 17,000, I don't think it will serve any useful purpose in enumerating those needs here. With these few words, I resume my seat.

Mr. V. S. Arumugham Pillai (Tovala cum Agasteeswaram): Sir, in dealing with this demand I must submit at the outset that the main feature of the P. W. D. budget is that it has provided a very inadequate allotment for expenditure so far as South Travancore is concerned. Sir, this has been the practice for the last so many years and in spite of repeated representations the practice still continues. Sir, South Travancore is mainly agricultural and so irrigation is an important problem there.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : Sir, I rise on a point of order. It seems that Mr. Kunjukrishna Pillai is taking the Chair and I have to say something about his allegations levelled against the Chief Engineer when my chance comes. Therefore I want to know whether I would be in order in criticising him when he is occupying the Chair.

President : The question arises only in this way. If a private member occupies the Chair he is not exempted by his being in the Chair from criticisms by another member. Moreover if you find it necessary that I should be present, certainly I will be here.

(The president then vacated the Chair and Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai one of the panel of Chairmen presided).

Mr. V. S. Arumugham Pillai : Sir, I was submitting that the P. W. D. allotment is very meagre so far as South Travancore is concerned. Excluding the items of allotment made under productive irrigation, if you compare the figures for South Travancore and for the rest of Travancore, the allotment for the former is very poor. Sir, as I submitted already, South Travancore is mainly agricultural, especially Nanjinad is depending on agriculture, and irrigation is one of the important essential requirements of the people of Nanjinad. Sir, with regard to the irrigational facilities, I may submit so far as South Travancore is concerned, it mainly depends upon the Kodayar reservoir. As regards the Kodayar reservoir, I have had various occasions to represent before this House and before the Government that it has completely failed and on account of its failure it has been an ever pressing and anxious problem for us. Sir, Kodayar was once believed to be a never failing source of water. The bitter experience of the drought commencing from 1111 onwards and continuing to the present day has revealed that there is no use in depending upon Kodayar for irrigation and the situation has come to such a plight that we will have to find out other sources and other ways to supplement the reservoir. In order to work out the project successfully there should be a complete change in the system of working. Sir, from the year 1110 onwards especially there have been repeated representations from the ryots that a supplementary reservoir is necessary. As I understand, an officer was deputed to investigate into the possibilities of constructing a supplementary reservoir. A reservoir at Perunchani was suggested and it was ordered that it should be investigated. Somehow or other I understand that the scheme has already been dropped. Sir, as I submitted already, irrigation is the life problem of the agriculturists of Nanjinad. Sir, no cultivation is possible without an adequate supply of water. Without cultivation it is impossible to pull on life there. This problem has assumed a serious stage so far as Nanjinad and Edanad are concerned. In this

connection I may allude to the view expressed by the late Mr. Watts about Nanjinad. He said in one of his speeches "so long as there is water in your reservoir you don't mind whether Rama rules or Ravana rules." The problem is so very vital that it is highly disappointing to see that the Government have easily shelved the question of constructing a supplementary reservoir. Sir, I once again submit that the system of working the project must also be completely changed. Sir, the main defects in the system of working the project is due to the fact that it was believed that this reservoir will be a never failing source of water. It was believed to be a Kamadhenu under a wrong calculation almost all the important tanks were auctioned away, thereby abolishing the old supplementary irrigational sources. Under the present system the lands which are 30 or 40 miles away from the reservoir have to depend upon it for water. As a consequence even during normal seasons, the lands which are situated at the tail end of the project do not get sufficient water, because the left bank channel is too insufficient for its burden. Consequently lands at the higher reaches get all the water and before the water reaches the tail end the season changes. The result is cultivation becomes impossible in those lands and the people are put to much suffering. Moreover the bitter experience of drought was felt for so many years only at these lands which are at the tail end. Therefore Government have now appointed a committee to advise them in the matter of constructing tanks and repairing the existing ones. But what I beg to submit in this connection is that since the amount allotted is meagre it is not possible to carry out the works as recommended by the committee.

Now with regard to the formation of the tanks and repairs to the existing tanks, preference must be given to the lands situated at the tail end. Sir, this is a very important matter and I would draw the special attention of the Chief Engineer to this. In this connection I may refer also to one another important matter which I have been pointing out to the Chief Engineer, that is with regard to the Kodayar Project. In order that it may work out successfully a separate Irrigation Division must be formed as Kodayar Irrigation Division. I have already submitted to the Chief Engineer the urgency and the need for this change. He has been very obstinate in refusing that request. Sir, considering the seriousness of the problem to the public of South Travancore and the magnitude of the work involved it is advisable to have a separate Division for Kodayar Project alone under one Executive Engineer. If the Government were to think that it would be rather costly, I may submit that the Road Branch may be amalgamated with the Trivandrum Division so that there will be no loss for the Government by way of special expenditure.

[Mr. V. S. Arumugham Pillai.]

I may submit that there may not be any loss to Government. No special expenditure on this account will have to be met because there is already the project account and the additional cost may be met from the profit accruing. Sir, this matter of formation of a separate Division for the Kodayar Project Division is an important one, because so many problems can be tackled and solved. If there is a separate Division it will be very easy to suggest ways and means to work out the project.

Mr. A. Easwara Pillai (*Kottarakara and Pottanapuram cum Shencottu*): Sir, I oppose the demand. My object in doing so is to point out the necessity of paying more attention to the means of communication in rural areas. At present, the department systematically neglects the rural areas. The major portion of the allotment is expended for embellishing the cities and towns in the State. The system for providing means of communication in rural areas is inelastic and not at all helpful to the rural population. The ryots are opening new roads in various taluks and the Department is averse to take up these roads and maintain them. They say that the Revenue Department is responsible for the delay in taking up the roads. The Revenue Department says that the people do not observe the ryots' road rules. Whoever be in fault, the fact is that the ryots receive no official help. They are entirely depending upon their self-exertion in opening roads in the various parts of the State. The enthusiasm of the people will continue only for a short time. Their resources are also scanty. Hence they will be compelled to neglect these roads. Thus considerable money and energy of the poor ryots are wasted. If the Department will take up these roads, without unnecessary delay the rural areas will be opened within a very short time by the enthusiastic ryots themselves. The result will be, we will have a net work of roads in the State. Therefore, I request the Government to take up this matter and bestow their particular attention to it. A decent amount should be set apart for improving the ryots roads. I represent a mountainous constituency. Most of the inhabitants there are agriculturists. They are in need of roads in opening the hilly tracts. The people themselves have constructed several new roads. Persistently the matter was brought to the notice of the authorities, but they seem to be unmindful and no sort of help is yet rendered. I therefore oppose the demand.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi (*Karunagapalli, Kartikapalli and Ambalapuzha cum Shertallai*): Sir, I rise to oppose the demand. In doing so, I shall draw the attention of Government to the fact that it is high time—I mean no personal

disparagement to the present Head of the Department for the Government—to appoint a well-trying and qualified Engineer as the Head of the Department. Sir, I can understand that William Shakespeare was not an University man. He had not attended any of the Universities and Colleges. Occasionally natural talent will assert itself. I belong to the orthodox class who believe that University training is indispensable in these modern days to help a man to discharge his duties as Chief Engineer in this State. Another gentleman, whose qualification perhaps in his natural talent, is causing great concern and anxiety to Government. I understand that he is a Russian Engineer of British domicile and when questions are asked about him no information is given, presumably on the ground that they belonged to the political class. To avoid certain avoidable criticisms, it is highly essential that a well qualified Engineer should be put as the Head of the Department. The present Chief Engineer was allowed to continue even after the expiry of the terms without any reference to the Legislature being made about it. I know statutorily the Government is not bound to consider the Legislature regarding the personnel of the Department. I was emboldened to say this because very huge items are included among the duties of the Chief Engineer. Sir, he has to discharge the functions in connection with the Town Planning Scheme. It is well-known that there are not very many Town Planning Engineers in India, or for that matter in the world, who have specialised in that branch of Engineering. I do not know whether the present Chief Engineer has got the experience necessary for working out such schemes. Yet he is put down for this item of work—an item for which we will have to spend thousands and thousands of rupees. It is not a mere question of spending money. Financial theories are elastic enough. If questions are put somebody from the Government benches will answer that they have taken up lands, they have begun spending the money or have launched upon some development work and so on. These are very common words and we are in such cases often at a loss to understand the meaning. I, therefore, shall concede that money lost is money gained. But if the town is disfigured, if the town is allowed to be planned without any reference to modern ideas of town planning, it will be very difficult and very late to set right things.

Another matter is the one relating to complaints—I must say the scandal, but I would avoid that word—in the matter of giving contracts. I am not bringing in any provincial or parochial questions in this connection. I would welcome a Tibetan Chief Engineer or a Chinese Commissioner of Police. But when undue encouragement is given to some contractors—I do not oppose them

[Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi.]

because they belong to British India or elsewhere—who are not doing very satisfactory work then we have room for complaint. There is one General Construction Company whose history is not well-known. My thoughts are wandering instinctively to Mr. Narayana Aiyar's question a few minutes ago with regard to the *Jyotisha* branch, because the personnel and the history could be found out with reference to that branch. It is well³ also for the Government to lay all the cards on the table. The public are entertaining vague suspicions and the Government must make it plain that there is no such grounds for suspicion. It is for the Department and the Government to clear matters connected with that. I think the company is financed by some people who are in the Government service. Leaving apart this question what shall I say about the Engineering talents of this Company. It is exhibited in the Alwaye Railway bridge and about this the less said the better. And then the Parur Bridge—I do not want to say all that and embarrass Government. The funds given from the Road Development Fund and the Funds from other Government than Travancore have also been utilised for the construction of this bridge. I was told that some other Government did not quite approve of the way in which it is being done, because unfortunately there are other Governments who are rather backward and are orthodox in the matter of Engineering and are not able to appreciate the talents of the Engineers of this State. Then again, what about the other bridges like the *Kannalipalam*. They say that that bridge is also not good although it has been completed by some outside contractors. It is not in a safe condition now. It may be unparliamentary but I would ask the Government to see that some outside Engineer who is unconnected with the Government supervises this bridge. The *Kannalipalam* and some of the latter day bridges are bridges built by some firm which is particularly patronised by the Engineering Department. I may also draw the attention of this House to the manner of doing things relating to the Pallivasal buildings. For the Power House tenders were invited. The amount fixed was Rs. 90,000 and some lucky firm was selected to be entrusted with the work. The auxillary portion of the work costing about Rs. 2 lakhs was given to the Construction Company without calling for any tenders. I ask the Government whether it could in any way enhance the prestige of the Government by doing things through the back door. When the Government wanted to do things in that manner it is better that they have the courage to tell us that for particular reasons they want to patronise one firm or another. They have not called for tenders for the auxillary item in connection

with the foundation work. This is what is called in common parlance cheating. Then again what about the paltry sum allotted for the construction of the roads. After all, that there are pedestrians may be the information of Government. Sir, the roads are the very primitive demand of the people. Well, Sir, in my constituency, from Neendakara to Cochin, the men, women and children are not following the programmes of Berlin and Liverpool. They are very primitive people. They ask for roads and the Government's declaration is never lacking in the finish of language. They say that if the people cry, Government would take up and maintain the roads. Believing the announcement of the Government several members joined and made representations. My friend Mr. M. S. Anirudhan—with whom I do not often see eye to eye on many matters—and myself, after all managed to agree on this matter and urged for the construction of a road from Ambalapuzha to Thiruvalla. All the members signed a representation and, hopefully, we submitted it to the Dewan. But nothing has come out of it so far. Similarly, in regard to many other important roads, Government do not pay any heed to our representations. For instance, there is the Kayamkulam-Karthikapalli road connecting those two taluks. We submitted memorials. We met successive Dewans on deputation. They were very courteous and shook hands with us; they enquired after our health. They assured us that the road was really useful and that in any scheme of roads this road would receive their particular attention. We were given to understand that the road would be taken up immediately.

Sir, I can understand why these roads are not taken up; there is lack of funds. But, if large sums of money can be expended for luxury, why not at least a small portion be diverted to such elementary needs of the people? I know, if the Government sanction these roads, it will not be advertised; the news will not be published with bold headlines in outside newspapers. "Kayamkulam-Karthikapalli road taken up by the Government of Travancore; result of the liberal minded policy since the Temple Entry Proclamation"; nothing like that may appear in any newspaper. Unfortunately these editors of newspapers are not quite alive to our needs; they will say that these are matters of local interest and therefore not of newspaper importance.

Sir, there is absolutely no harm in the Government occasionally doing something which may not appear in any newspaper, something which will be of real use to the poor people who are faithful to the Government, who pay taxes to the Government. You raise your income by indirect taxation of these poor people also. Once in a way something may be done for the poor. After all, Sir, we are asking only for crumbs from the financial table, if I may say so.

[Mr. Kochikkal P. Balakrishnan Tampi.]

Sir, frivolity apart, I should submit that, by this attitude of the Government—I am confining myself to the P. W. D. just now—in neglecting the elementary needs of the people, when people realise by experience that their own representations and the representations of their representatives in the Legislature, are not paid any heed to by Government, all that I can say is that it will be a very bad day for any Government.

With these words I oppose the Demand.

Mr. M. S. Anirudhan (*Karunapapally, Kartigapally and Ambalapuzha cum Shertallai*): Sir, I take this opportunity to offer a few remarks merely to bring to the notice of the Government the important needs of my constituency. Last year, when local needs were brought to the notice of the Chief Engineer, he was good enough to ask us to put in writing our immediate needs. We did do it. Looking at the small amount allotted for road development during the year 1114, I think it is better not to say anything about the necessity for roads. Still, I think I may refer to some of them which I consider really important and urgent.

Sir, the Quilon-Alleppey road and the Alleppey-Arur road are two of the most important roads in the State with very heavy traffic. Unfortunately, these two roads are not properly maintained at regular intervals.

We have been repeatedly appealing to the Government to construct a bridge at Thottapalli. Nothing has been done so far; and I do not know when the Government are going to take it up.

In regard to the road between Alleppey and Thanneermukkam, it is now fifteen or sixteen years since it was taken up; unfortunately, to this day, it stands incomplete.

Then, Sir, there is another road, just one-and-a-half miles long from the ninth mile of the Alleppey-Aroor road to Kanichikulangara. The land has been surveyed and estimate has been prepared; but nobody knows what has become of all these.

Last year, Government were good enough to invite members of the Kuttanad area for a conference regarding the opening of a road from Changanachery to Alleppey through Kuttanad. When we received the invitation we were very jubilant over the matter and really thought that something was going to be done in that direction. The conference was held; our suggestions were recorded. But nothing has been done so far, and we are at a loss to know what the Government propose to do in the matter.

There is a canal between Changanachery and Alleppey. It is almost complete; only a few miles have yet to be constructed. The matter has been brought to the notice of the Government more

than once. Still no attention is being bestowed upon it by the Government. Then, Sir, there is the Alleppey-Shertala canal, a portion of which has already been constructed. The total length of the canal will not exceed 14 miles. About 6 miles from Alleppey and 3 miles from Shertala have already been completed ; there are only 4 or 5 miles in the middle yet to be done. Although the matter has been agitated upon for the last 15 years, Government, have not found it possible to finish the work.

I wish to speak a few words about the Alleppey boat basin. In response to the request made by the commercial classes in Alleppey, Government were pleased to agree to construct a boat basin at a cost of Rs. 15,000. The work was stopped half-way, and I understand that, unless it is taken up immediately and completed, the whole of the money spent already would be an absolute waste. I hope the Government will look into the matter and do the needful immediately.

With these words I oppose the Demand.

Mrs. Abernam Gnanasikamony (*Nominated*): Sir, while supporting the Demand I have to make an appeal to the Government for their kind consideration and favourable disposal,

My first point is regarding a road which branches off from the Trivandrum-Cape road near a place called Paramarthalingapuram, goes southward to Thamarakulam and joins the Kovalam-Manakudi road. The road was constructed by the villagers themselves with the consent of the Government, by widening the left bank of the Kottayadi Channel ; and the people have spent up on it Rs. 1,300 in addition to their own manual labour. (*At this stage the President took the Chair.*) Mr. Krishna Aiyangar, the then Executive Engineer, declared the road open and promised that the Government would soon be metalling it for the people. Metalling was begun and was done for about 2 miles. Nothing further was done, and the road is now in a deplorable condition. During rainy season big breaches occur, and the road is dangerous even for pedestrian especially at night. I therefore appeal to the Government to arrange for the metalling of the road as early as possible.

There is another road branching from this road, which passes through Chanthayadi, Eachanvilai and other villages and then joins the Kottaram-Agastiswaram road which requires the attention of the Government. This road was sanctioned 20 years ago in the days of His Highness the late Sri Mulam Tirunal Maharaja. I am glad to find that our appeals made here are being heard by the Government and acted upon. This time, last year an appeal was made here regarding the Kovalam-Manakudi road. Steps were immediately taken, and we now find that the road is in a much better condition than it was. I was there last week and I found it in a much better condition than it used to be some time back, although I cannot say that full justice has been done to it.

[Mrs. Abernam Gnanasikhamony.]

Sir, being encouraged by such kindness at the hands of the Government, I appeal to them to bestow their early attention to the two roads I have already mentioned.

Even in the main road, the Trivandrum-Cape road, some parts near small bridges are very narrow, too narrow for two vehicles to cross each other ; and one vehicle has to stop at the other side in order to give room for the other to pass on.

A few days ago an accident was about to take place in one of these places. The frightened bullocks of a cart were about to jump over the bridge as it were and the poor cart driver was in such a panic that he jumped from his cart. No one can imagine the state of mind of the poor cart driver at that time. Fortunately nothing had happened. When I happened to see that, I thought I must represent it to the Chief Engineer here. I think the Chief Engineer will be kind enough to do the needful for my constituency. With these words I support the demand.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : Sir, I regret, I have to oppose the demand. I am doing it with a view to point out certain necessary roads that are required for Nedumangad. I have brought it to the attention of the Chief Engineer and the other authorities, times without number, but that has not been properly attended to. Interpellations have been sent and curiously some of them have been disallowed. I have spoken to the Chief Engineer in person. The people of certain localities have petitioned to Government stating that they are prepared to give the requisite land free to Government and I am told that estimates have been sanctioned once. I refer to the road that was proposed to be constructed between Aruvikara and Vellanad. Also I have pointedly drawn the attention of the Chief Engineer and I am told that the people of the locality have petitioned the Government also, in regard to the necessity of opening a road between Peyyad and Trivandrum. That road would increase the traffic to Trivandrum and enable the raw-materials from Nedumangad to be brought to Trivandrum in a shorter time. But all the same, I am in absolute sympathy with the unfortunate Chief Engineer because he is helpless in the matter. He can only ask for sufficient money but it is for the Government to sanction it. I heard my honourable friend Mr. Sultan Muhieddeen in his maiden speech stating that the Chief Engineer has not granted any roads. I ask where is the Chief Engineer to go for funds. For a big State like Travancore, the provision for next year is Rs. 17,000 for the construction of new roads. Last year

the provision was Rs. 72,000. Think of the difference, Sir, when for the branch of the A. P. I. a sum of Rs. 24,000 is being given annually.

President : Order, order. The member will kindly be relevant.

Mr. Nadumangad R. Kesavan Nair : Sir, there is no point in blaming the Chief Engineer. If you give him sufficient materials and sufficient money and then ask him to give new roads and if he is indifferent there is some point in blaming him. All the same, hailing from a taluk where roads are absolutely necessary when other members go in with applications for new roads to the helpless Chief Engineer who has been given only Rs. 17,000. I also feel constrained to make a similar demand. Sir, pointed references was made yesterday with regard to certain irregularities in calling for tenders and alternative designs. To me it is a sealed book and I should like to know the specific cases which could be stated against the Chief Engineer. Of course, if he has done anything irregular he has to be dealt with. I am just pointing out that there is no meaning in making an attack on the Chief Engineer or pointing out to the Chief Engineer that he should provide us with new roads without giving him sufficient funds for the purpose. Give him sufficient funds and if he is found to be indifferent afterwards there is some meaning in launching an attack against him. Last year in the P. W. D. Budget we found that an amount of Rs. 32,07,700 had been spent. There has been a hue and cry for new roads, for the maintenance of roads and for increased means of communications throughout the State. In spite of that the provision that is made for next year is Rs. 31 odd lakhs, an amount less than what has been spent in the previous year. As I said, the provision for constructing new roads next year is Rs. 17,000 against the provision of Rs. 72,000 in the previous year.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar : May I inform the honourable member that this amount of Rs. 17,000 includes the cost of metal-ling the roads also ?

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair : That only makes the position of the Chief Engineer much more helpless.

Mr. K. R. Elankath : Sir, I oppose the demand mainly on two grounds; firstly, to criticise the general policy of the Department in allotting funds for the various items which go to make the demand and secondly, to criticise the way in which these funds are distributed to the various localities. I shall not narrate here, as so many honourable members have narrated the local needs one by one because I know that they will not be taken care of by the Chief Engineer as they deserve. He may jot them down before our eyes,

[Mr. K. R. Elenkath.]

and throw the paper into the waste paper basket on his way out of the Hall or in his office. He may make jocular remarks to his neighbour. So I do not think much use will come out of it. I shall only say that in the general distribution of funds Government should adopt some definite policy. Year after year what you find in the distribution of funds is that for various items—buildings, communications, miscellaneous expenditure etc.,—amounts equal to those sanctioned in the previous year are brought forward and passed in this House. Now I very much doubt whether these demands have been specifically and carefully brought before the Department by the people who are responsible for giving these figures.

Sir, coming to the actual figures that are before us, out of the total allotment of Rs. 48,45,136 for the Public Works Department we find that a major portion of it goes by way of salaries to the officers. It is a very top heavy department, especially when we find that these officers have practically not much of the work that they were having before when much less was spent on the salaries of officers. Government do not see their way to curtail the expenditure in that direction. Even in the distribution of funds for various items we find a sum of Rs. 1,02,900 allotted for small repairs, small sheds and works like that. Generally what we find in the case of these maintenance works is that they come under Government buildings, and I do not find that this amount is actually spent in repairing or maintaining the buildings. It is in the interests of each Department to see that the demand does not diminish whether there is real necessity for the funds for improvement of buildings or for repairs or not. That is because the head of each Department fears that if he does not ask for an amount nearing the amount which was demanded in the previous year, it may affect him in the future. On that pretext even if a building does not require Rs. 200 or 300 for repairs but requires only white-washing, the previous year's demand is demanded and it is wasted practically. Whether it goes to the Department or to the contractors we do not know. There are leakages in regard to that.

Coming to communications many of my honourable friends referred to the absolute inadequacy of the grant which is being asked for. We do not grudge to allow any amount for communications. But the question is where Government can find funds for them. It is for the Government to cut down under so many items the wasteful expenditure and provide for the actual needs of the people, not only in maintaining the works already in existence but in opening new roads which are the only sources of developing

rural areas. I find that only a sum of Rs. 2,97,700 is allotted for communications and out of this amount not even Rs. 10,000 goes for opening of new roads. What I find is only Rs. 5,000 because as Mr. Narayana Aiyar pointed out that item includes the cost of metalling of existing roads. I wonder how Mr. Kesavan Nair said that Rs. 17,000 has been allotted for new roads. This is a very sad feature indeed.

Another important need of the villages is facility for getting good drinking water. In regard to this I find absolutely no provision made for certain areas which practically need all the help. Although nearly Rs. 5,000 is allotted on the whole for Travancore what I find is that a magnificent sum of Rs. 100 is provided for digging a well in Aloor Pakuthy. What is the use of talking of big schemes for big boons to the masses when only Rs. 100 out of an allotment of Rs. 40 lakhs and more is provided for giving good drinking water to the villagers.

Another thing to which I wish to make reference is irrigation which is the main source on which the cultivators and ryots of South Travancore depend for their very existence. This has been pressed on the attention of this House often times as each session passes on and practically no corresponding result has come out of it. We do realise that Government have been finding ways and means to investigate how the water supply of Kodayar could be augmented, whether supplementary reservoirs could be taken up, whether all the tanks could be restored and all that, but when we come to practical problems what is it that we have got after insistent prayers to Government?

Not very much. I am glad to find at least some provision for the restoration of a dozen tanks in Nanjanad and Edanad in this year's budget. That is practically a very meagre provision when we look to the present condition of the ryots of that area. The Head of the administration and His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore have visited those areas to the great relief of the ryots and they were anxiously waiting to get a big boon. Although they have got something in that direction, that is not adequate to our expectations when considering that those places contribute much to Government by way of taxation. It is known to all that taxation is very heavy in Nanjanad when compared to the Kuttanad area. The taxation comes to more than Rs. 22 per head and that amount is paid excluding the water cess for getting no water at all. That is the position of the ryots in North Travancore. We expected to get some substantial help from Government, but we have been disappointed.

[Mr. K. R. Elankath.]

More than three-quarters of the total receipts from tolls is realised from South Travancore. There are very many toll gates belonging to Government as well as others and Government are not justified in realising very big amounts by way of tolls from the ryots of South Travancore. It is true that for building bridges amounts have been spent from capital accounts, and tax should be levied on cars that make use of the road. The principle is all good. I do not know how the Government are justified in establishing more than a dozen tolls in and round the Monday Market. There are no bridges anywhere near that place. There are no roads which could consume a great item of the expenditure for maintaining them. Imagine a person who has to take a patient from Eraniel to Neyyoor, that is, half a mile to the Salvation Army hospital. He has to pay a toll. If he has to take his agricultural products to the market, he has to pay a toll. If he has to take manure to some place, he has to pay some toll. In every way, he has to pay tolls. Where is money for the poor cultivator to pay as toll on very many ways. Practically the maximum amount got by way of tolls is only six lakhs of rupees. The major portion of this amount comes from the poor agriculturists. Now I ask Government whether they are justified in realising such a large sum by way of tolls and that from the agriculturists in South Travancore.

President : The honourable member will please abbreviate his remarks because there are two other members who want to speak on this demand.

Mr. K. R. Elankath : Therefore I suggest that even if the Government were to make a small adjustment out of the six lakhs received by way of tolls, it will relieve the agriculturists to some extent. There is no objection in increasing the registration fee, even if it is doubled, six lakhs of rupees will not have to be given up. A sum equal to Rs. 2 lakhs may be realised by way of this fee. Therefore by receiving such an amount the Government will not be a loser. Under these circumstances the abolishment of toll-gates should immediately receive the attention of Government. I also request that ample provision may be made for irrigation and other works.

Mr. N. V. Chacko : Sir, North Travancore is a place which has only very few roads and it will take a long time for Government to supply that part of the country with adequate number of roads. It appears that the Chief Engineer is not wanted by certain people but I would be glad if he were to be interned in my constituency, so that he might have better opportunity to know the paucity and poor condition of roads there.

I would make three requests of him. He should take up the roads that were constructed by the ryots themselves and make them cartable by giving them finishing touches as early as possible. Some culverts may have to be made in some cases. He should attend to the construction of the roads for which Government had sanctioned money, but the construction was not begun or had not progressed satisfactorily for some reason or other. The Chief Engineer should construct new roads also at least these that are important.

I will make mention of a few roads of that type, not as the sum total of my demand, but as instances. The first road is from Puthenkurisu to Puthen Chingam. That road when constructed will become an important link connecting the Cochin Harbour. Another road is from Piravom to Peruvumvazhi passing through Ramamangalam. That is now being maintained by the Department. That road has to be improved, although there is an annual show of improvement. Another road is one proceeding from Ankamali to Manjali. It appears the attention of Government and the Chief Engineer are concentrated on towns. I am not saying that towns should be neglected. But the rural parts should also be considered. There is no objection to the face being shaved, the head being combed and scent being applied to it. But some sandals have to be provided by way of protection to the aching feet and some soothing balm applied to the sore soles. Otherwise the head cannot stand. I do not know whether the Chief Engineer is being prosecuted by the Government asking him to make bricks without supplying him with stores as the Israelites of old in Egypt. But whatever that be, I request Government and the Chief Engineer, again and again, that North Travancore may be supplied with more and more roads until aeroplanes have become the fashion of the day in Travancore.

Mr. James Fletcher : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of Government to the unsatisfactory way in which repairs are now carried out in the case of irrigation tanks. Certainly a sum of money is budgetted for improving the irrigation tanks. But that is not adequate. What is being done at present is that the contractors take the silt to the bed of those tanks and leave it there, so much so, when the next rain comes all that goes to the tank. All that is collected from the tank goes back to the tank. Therefore the money spent on it becomes useless.

Mr. K. R. Elankath : May I know whether the silt does not spoil the road also?

Mr. James Fletcher: Yes. My point is not with reference to the roads. My point is with reference to the money wasted on the work which in turn becomes useless. Therefore I would suggest that the Chief Engineer when he gives contract for tank repairs should make it a condition that the silt taken from the bed of the tank is placed in such a position as would not come back to the bed of the tank during the rains. He should make some such provision in the contract so that the silt taken away from the tanks may not come back to them, thereby enabling the tanks to hold as much quantity of water as they can for a few years more.

• Another point is that in repairing these tanks, before the final bill is given, the contractor should satisfy the officers concerned that the work has been done to their entire satisfaction. In addition it should be noted whether he has fulfilled the provisions of the contract entered into by him. I am informed that very often work is done in such shabby way that the money spent on that purpose becomes a waste. Everybody has to realise that money is very sacred because it has to be repaid in the form of tax; it has to be so spent as to make the ryot fit for paying back the money in the form of tax. Therefore every pie spent for this purpose should be utilised in the best way possible.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott (Chief Engineer): Sir, so many points have been raised in the course of the discussion that, I am afraid I shall not have time to refer to them all in the time at my disposal; but I will do my best to reply to as many of the important points raised as I can. Many of the questions as usual relate to roads. Such demands as you are well aware are made on every occasion of the budget debate. One honourable member said that we have only Rs. 17,000 under 'new works' for the construction of new roads. That is so. But there is an allotment of Rs. 2,60,700 under "communications—works in progress," for continuing such works, that have been started in previous years. That amount should be added to this Rs. 17,000 to get a better view of the funds we expect to expend on construction of roads during the next year. I am sorry we have not sufficient funds allotted to supply the needs mentioned by the honourable members.

Mr. Godavarma Raja said that a committee should be appointed to prepare a list of roads and bridges to be constructed in Travancore. There was such a committee once and we have a list of roads and bridges prepared by that committee; but what that committee did not do was to indicate any priority in which the construction should take place. I do not know how many years it

would take for Government to work out that list, but it would entail an expenditure of many lakhs of rupees, for I have already sanctioned estimates amounting to, I believe, ten lakhs of rupees pending construction when funds become available. It is not possible for Government to make any discrimination between the importance of several roads in certain parts of Travancore to enable them to prepare a priority list. Therefore I would repeat the plea I made last year in connection with this and, that is, that the members of the several parties in the House should give a list of really urgent roads to their leader and then decide among themselves the order in which the construction should be taken up. If such a list is prepared, Government will, I am sure, allot funds specially for that purpose; and once the urgent needs are known, they are prepared to make a 3 or 5 year plan so that the needs of the inhabitants can be taken care of. I would commend that proposal to the members of this House and ask them to consider seriously my proposal and carry it into practical shape.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai raised the point that contracts are given outside the State. It was also stated by him that alternative tenders are invited in certain works.

He said that it was a novel procedure instituted by me. I fully explained to this House in the budget debate of 1112 that it was not a novel procedure although Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai would still have it that it is so. It is a procedure followed right throughout the P. W. D. in British India and it was in force in this department a long time before I came to Travancore. For example amongst others the Alleppey Pier, the Punalur Suspension bridge, the Neendakara bridge and the Neriambangalam bridge were carried out by outside contractors on their designs some direct and some alternative before my advent. The system with regard to calling tenders for important contracts is that the P. W. Department prepares designs and estimates and submits them to Government. If Government approve, contractors are then asked to tender on that design and also are invited if they wish to submit an alternative design and tender along with their tender for the departmental design. The particulars on which the departmental design was based, that is, loading, width of roadway, etc., have to be adhered to in every way. This method of inviting tenders allows us to take advantage of the latest developments in engineering science by those firms who specialize in such works. We get the latest design in engineering and if the price is favourable Government get a good job at a reduced cost. I do not see that there is anything wrong in that method. It seems to me plain common sense whatever others may say.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai (*Quilon cum Kun-nattur*): May I know whether the Chief Engineer under this system is enabled by choosing a particular design from a particular contractor to give him also the benefit of the rates that he quotes without competition?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: It might be possible if he wished; it has not occurred to me. But I would say that all the designs are considered and if some one can give us something as good at a cheaper rate by using some other methods of his own, I would recommend Government to accept that offer.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai: May I know whether any opportunity is given to others after the Government accepts a particular design to tender and compete?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: Not on the contractor's design. All contractors tender on the departmental design, they are not asked to tender on the alternative design submitted by a contractor which is his own property. It is not always the alternative design is adopted, as for instance, the Alwaye bridge is that of the department.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai: May I know from the member whether the Alwaye bridge, the Kannalipalam and the Jagadhi bridge were all done like this by inviting alternative tenders?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I was saying that the design of the Alwaye bridge was that of the department, and the others were by alternative designs submitted by the contractors. It was also suggested by the honourable member that bridges should be constructed departmentally. The Chengannur bridge which was constructed departmentally cost Rs. 980 per foot run and the Muvattupuzha bridge cost a bit less, whereas, the cost of the Neria-mangalam bridge is Rs. 570 a foot run; and the Alwaye bridge is estimated to cost much less.

The honourable member said that cement and steel have been purchased in greater quantities since my advent. That is not a fact. The quantities of cement that we have imported yearly for the P. W. D. for the past ten years is about the same although more bridges have been constructed lately than formerly. I may also point out to the honourable member that the use of cement and steel is not a new thing in Travancore. Mr. Bastow, I believe, built the first reinforced concrete bridge in South India. I am referring to the Periyar bridge which, in spite of larger bridges having been built since, is one that any one in Travancore may still justly be proud of.

Mr. Kunjukrishna Pillai has another complaint regarding the lodging of earnest money which he also wishes to criticise. The fact is that a certain contractor submitted a tender to a certain officer and asked that the earnest money to be deposited should be deducted from moneys due to him by Government. This was, on reference to me, refused.

Mr. Muhamed Ismail made special mention of the repairs of a particular road. If the member means the road connecting Ponkunnam—Lalom with Kanjirapally Erattupetta road, I would say the people in the locality have constructed that road and we are proposing now to take that over through the Revenue Department.

Mention was made by one honourable member about certain ryots' roads. The rules are that the roads should be opened to a breadth of 22 ft. and all earth work to be done by the ryots after that, the Land Revenue Department takes over the land and hands it over to the department for improvement and maintenance. In no case is this ever refused and we help the ryots by laying out the line and giving whatever advice they require when asked to do so.

Mr. K. R. Elankath: May I know how many ryots' roads there are which have been completed and handed over to the department?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I have not any idea of the number of roads that Mr. Elankath is referring to. But as soon as the Land Revenue Department takes possession of the lands and hands them over to us, the department takes them under its management.

Mr. K. R. Elankath: May I know what the member has to say about the Neyyoor-Chembavinvila road?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I have nothing to say at present about it as I am unable to identify the particular road.

One honourable member referred to the K. K. road between Mundakayam and Devicolam. I do not agree with the honourable member that that road is in a dangerous condition. I have been up and down the road many times. It would be nice to have parapet along the roads.

Mr. T. Mahomed Ismail: May I know whether the member has travelled all through the road?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: Yes, several times. I agree that it would add to the feeling of safety if there was parapet all through. But I must say that I have never felt nervous whether I was being driven in a car or driving myself.

[Mr. G. B. E. Truscott.]

Mr. Thomas referred to the bridge at Palai. An estimate has been prepared for rebuilding that bridge. The estimate amounts to Rs. 2,22,000 and I am afraid it has to wait execution for want of funds.

He also referred to the fact that Government schools were being held in rented buildings. This is a matter with which the department is not directly concerned. But I must say that it would involve very heavy expense if we have to build new buildings everywhere to take the place of rented buildings. It is a matter concerning some other department and not to the P. W. Department.

Mr. R. V. Thomas (*Thodupuzha cum Minachil*): I did not mean that the P. W. D. must construct buildings for the housing of schools. I have no objection in housing them in rented buildings. I pointed out that fact to show that it is all the more desirable if Government spends some money for this bridge which is very necessary.

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I am sorry I did not understand the honourable member's point; but a sum of Rs. 2,20,000 is rather too big for the construction of this bridge to be considered at present.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know what has become of the Vellanad-Aruvikara road?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I am afraid I cannot refer to any particular road now as I have not the information with me. My time is very limited.

There was one reference to Thengapattanam road.

Mr. Nedumangad R. Kesavan Nair: May I know why the Chief Engineer is not going to answer my question?

Mr. G. B. E. Truscott: I cannot answer the question as I am not now in possession of facts regarding the road that the honourable member refers to.

President: Order, order. For the purpose of future guidance, and in order to avoid contingencies like the one now happening, I would suggest that, even though under the Rules appertaining to the State Council, cut motions cannot be brought forward in the same manner as elsewhere, some kind of indication may be given to the Secretary as to what points honourable members wish to speak about, so that Government members may be prepared to answer those points and so as to obviate this kind of discontent that a particular point which one honourable member has very much at heart has been missed by Government.